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ABSTRACT

Collective negotiations in public education is a relatively recent development that has tended to erode the principal's options, managerial authority, and professional status. The recent introduction of the "management team," an attempt to ameliorate this situation, has placed principals in the "management" camp in an adversarial role with teachers, who are viewed as "labor." Educational literature contains little to address this philosophical and practical dilemma. This study, based on a University of Oklahoma doctoral study (1984), sought to determine whether school district size and length of time the school district has been negotiating are causal factors in differential perceptions of secondary school principals' role in collective bargaining. A modified perception assessment instrument was administered to 255 school board presidents, superintendents, secondary school principals, and local education association presidents. Analysis of variance and t-test techniques were used to test 18 hypotheses related to 6 basic research questions. Findings showed that the length of negotiating time was not a causal factor in the four groups' differential perceptions. School district size was found to be a significant causal factor. Significant perception differences were found between role partners in large and small school districts. Perceptions of local education association presidents differed significantly from those of other role groups. Included are a questionnaire sample and 13 references. (MLN)

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The Perceived Role of Oklahoma Secondary School Principals in Collective Negotiations

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The Perceived Role of Oklahoma Secondary School

Principals in Collective Negotiations

Background

Collective negotiations in public education is a relatively recent development. From 1961, when Wisconsin became the first state to authorize local units of government to negotiate with public employees, to September 1980, when 35 states (Green, 1981) permitted collective bargaining by teachers, the effects of collective negotiations in the public sector have become clear, particularly as they affect the role of the school principal. In the early days of collective negotiations, salary and fringe benefits for teachers were the primary items of negotiation. Since 1975, however, teachers have sought a greater voice in certain policy decisions, i.e., reductions in force, grievance arbitration, voluntary and involuntary transfer, inservice training and evaluation (Kerchner and Mitchell, 1982). While school principals were free to exercise a great deal of discretion in the operation of their schools before the advent of negotiations, the collective bargaining process has tended to erode the principal's options, managerial authority and professional status (Panance, 1975).

One response to the perceived loss of power, status and influence on the part of principals was the introduction of the "management team" concept by school superintendents. Practically, the implementation of this concept placed principals in the "management" camp in an adversarial role with teachers, who were viewed as "labor." While the "management team" concept was perhaps conceptually clear and theoretically defensible, it also placed principals in a difficult philosophical and practical dilemma. Philosophically, many principals, having been teachers, identified with teachers and found it difficult to view themselves or be viewed as separate and distinct from teachers. These

principals were dismayed by the difficulty of initiating and sustaining professional relations with teachers in situations where many of the relationships were contractually defined and determined. More often than not, the principals' administrative and leadership behavior were viewed with suspicion and distrust because of their identification with the management team.

The "management team" concept, whether operational or not, appears to be the dominant model reflecting the principal's position and role in collective bargaining. This is particularly true, given that in 1981 only approximately 20 percent of all principals nationwide were members of bargaining units (Greenleaf and Goodman, 1982). The conflicting, "in the middle," position in which principals feel they have been placed in the collective negotiations process is an indication of flaws in the "management team" concept. While there have been few studies dealing with the concept's shortcomings, even fewer have dealt with the lack of consensus regarding the principal's role in collective bargaining. While perceptions of the role of the principal have been researched to some extent, the effects of mediating variables, such as school district size and time/experience in negotiations have been relatively unresearched.

Brief Review of Related Literature

Getzels, (et al., 1968) suggested that role set, the behavior expected in relation to specific groups in a social system, is the most important analytic unit of an organization. Each person occupying an organizational role is expected to function in certain specific and differentiated ways in dealing with others in the organization and out. These role sets frequently differ among the various role groups and are potential sources of intrapersonal and interpersonal stress and conflict within the organization.

To the extent that there is not a consensus among members of the various roles, there will be a decided lack of meshing in the resulting interaction and

activity being attempted (Haas and Drabek, 1973, p. 147). The level of role consensus among members is inversely related to the incidence of friction in the organization (Haas, 1964, p. 82). Numerous studies have shown that low group consensus is associated with disharmony and less job satisfaction (Getzels, et al., 1968; Haas and Drabek, 1973; Jacobson, Charter and Lieberman, 1951). The role set differences regarding the principal's role in collective negotiations has been and is equally dysfunctional for the public school organization.

A review of the literature substantiates the existence of differenetial perceptions of the role of the principal relating to the operation of the public schools and to the collective negotiations process. Ackers (1981) found that perceptual differences existed between school administrators and school board presidents in Texas, while Weber (1976) found significant differences among schoo' board chairmen, superintendents, principals and other teachers in Idaho. Similarly, Bardall (1976) found significant differences among principals in Ohio.

As time and size tend to affect perceptions and organizational dynamics, some data suggests that they also affect the negotiations process. Markes (1976) found that time affected the nature of the issues involved in collective negotiations and Brandt (1975) found that time affected the role of the principal. In Ackers' (1981) study, significant differences in perception among school board presidents and school administrators representing school districts of varying sizes were found. This manuscript seeks to contribute to the growing body of literature dealing with collective negotiations, using the role of the secondary school principal in Oklahoma as a paradigm.

Methodology

A perceptionnaire was used to assess the perceptions of four role groups (local school board presidents, superintendents, secondary school principals and local teacher union/association presidents) regarding the ideal and actual roles of

the secondary school principals in the collective negotiations process (see Appendix A for a description of the perceptionnaire). The perceptionnaire was mailed to a stratified random sample of 328 individuals who represented evenly the four role groups, the 82 school districts which currently negotiate and the variable groupings, district size and length of time in negotiations. However, only 255 or 78 percent of the perceptionnaires were returned to the researcher.

Eighteen hypotheses were tested to answer the following research questions:

(1) Is there a difference of perception among the four role groups regarding the actual and ideal roles of secondary school principals in collective negotiations?

(2) Is there a difference of perceptions among the four role groups from large, middle and small size school districts regarding the actual and ideal roles of the secondary school principal in collective negotiations?

(3) Is there a difference of perceptions among the four role groups in schools which have negotiated five years and less and school districts that have negotiated more than five years regarding the actual and ideal role of the secondary school principal in collective negotiations?

The hypotheses were tested using, a 2 X 3 analyses of variance to test for the effects of school size and length of time in negotiations and a one-way analysis of variance to test for the main effects of role in the school district. Tukey's HSD test was used to determine where group differences actually existed, if the resulting F score from the analyses of variance confirmed the hypothesis. A simple correlation, unrelated to the hypotheses, was computed to assess the strength of the relationship between actual and ideal perceptions of

the principal's roles for each of the four role groups. The first two of the eighteen hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance and the remaining 16 were tested at the .10 level.

Results

Table 1, below, is a summary of the responding population sample by school district size and length of time in negotiations.

Table 1

Population Sample By School district Size and District Time in Negotiations

	LARGE[1]		MIDDLE[2]		SMALL[3]		
	5 years or less	More than 5 years	5 years or less	More than 5 years	5 years or less	More than 5 years	Total (% of total)
board presidents	7	6	6	9	15	4	57
superin-tendents	7	11	11	13	22	10	90
secondary principals	8	12	11	10	24	8	89
union presidents	9	9	6	10	20	7	74
Total	31	38	34	42	81	29	255

[1] District ADM of 3,000+ students.
[2] District ADM of 1,000-2,999 students.
[3] District ADM of less than 1,000 students.

The following statements of finding suggest the affirmatively stated hypotheses which were accepted and which are the primary bases for discussion in the remainder of the paper:

(1) Local union/association presidents differed significantly from school board presidents, superintendents and secondary school principals in their perceptions of the actual and ideal roles of the secondary school principal in collective negotiations.

(2) Superintendents of small school districts were significantly different from those of large school districts in their perceptions of the actual role of the secondary school principal in collective negotiations.

(3) Secondary school principals of small school districts were significantly different from those of large and middle size school districts in their perceptions of the ideal role of the secondary school principal in collective negotiations.

(4) Secondary school principals of large school districts were significantly different from those of small school districts in their perceptions of the actual role of the secondary school principal in collective negotiations.

Table 2, below, shows the relevant data for confirmed hypothesis (1) above.

Table 2

Mean Item Scores of Role Groups and Results of Tukey's HSD Test

Role Group	$\bar{X}$ (Actual)	$\bar{X}$ (Ideal)
a) superintendents	3.90	4.14
b) board presidents	3.72	3.95
c) secondary principals	3.67	3.91
d) union/association presidents	3.28	3.46
Total	3.64	3.87

a x d = .18 (NS)	a x b = .19 (NS)
a x c = .23 (NS)	a x c = .23 (NS)
a x d = .62*	a x d = .68*
b x c = .05 (NS)	b x c = .05 (NS)
b x d = .44*	b x d = .49*
c x d = .34*	c x d = .45*

NS (not significant at the .05 level)
* (significant at the .05 level)

Table 2 indicates that superintendents had the highest mean item scores on both the actual and ideal scales, 3.90 and 4.14, respectively. Union/association presidents had the lowest scores on the two scales, 3.28 and 3.46, respectively. The mean item score of the union/association presidents was below the mean score of the total sample on both scales; while the mean scores of the other three groups were above the mean score of the total sample. These data suggest a strong tendency for perceiving the principal's role in collective negotiations as being oriented toward the management position as one moves "up" the hierarchy. As one moves "down" the hierarchy, the tendency is to view the principals' role as being oriented toward the labor, teacher, position. This is true for both the ideal and real perceptions. Neither group perceived that the ideal role of the principal was being achieved. Interestingly, union/association presidents actually perceived the ideal role of the principal to be more management oriented than it actually was. One might have assumed that the actual scores of union/association presidents would have exceeded the ideal score. Equally interesting is that superintendents had a greater expectation (ideal) of the principal assuming a management role than did board presidents and perceived that principals actually assumed this role to a greater extent than did board presidents. The actual and ideal perceptions of the principals and board presidents were more similar than were the perceptions of either of the two groups to the perceptions of the superintendents.

The bottom half of Table 2 indicates the results of Tukey's HSD Test of significant differences between means. It indicates that perceptions of union/association presidents were significantly different from those of the other three groups on both the ideal and real scales. The other three groups did not differ significantly from each other.

Table 3 indicates that superintendents from large size school districts were significantly different from superintendents from small size school districts in their view of the actual role of the secondary school principal in collective negotiations (hypothesis 2). The measured difference in perception between superintendents from large size school districts and those from middle size districts, .24, is less, than the difference between superintendents from large size school districts and superintendents from small size school districts, .54, and between superintendents from large size school districts and superintendents from middle size school districts, .30. Large size school and middle size school district superintendents are more similar in their perceptions of the actual role of the secondary school principal than is either group to small size school superintendents.

Table 3

Mean Item Scores of Superintendents by District Size;
Results of Tukeys HSD Test (actual)

		$\bar{X}$ (actual)
a. large size school districts		4.16
b. middle size school districts		3.92
c. small size school districts		3.62
Total		3.90
$\bar{a}$-$\bar{b}$=.24(NS)	$\bar{a}$-$\bar{c}$=.54*	$\bar{b}$-$\bar{c}$=.30 (NS)

*significant at the .05 level

Confirmed hypotheses 3 and 4 dealt with the variables, school district size and secondary school principal's perceptions of the actual and ideal roles of the secondary school principal in collective negotiations. Table 4 indicates that a) secondary school principals from large size school districts were significantly different from their counterparts in small size school districts in their perceptions of the actual role of the secondary school principal in collective negotiations (an HSD T value of .54); b) secondary school principals from large size and middle size school districts were significantly different from secondary

school principals in small size school districts in their perceptions of the ideal role of the secondary school principal in collective negotiations (with HSD t-values of .79 and .50, respectively). Large size and small size district secondary principals were not significantly different from each other in either their actual or ideal perceptions of the negotiating role of the secondary school principal. Middle size and small size district secondary school principals were not significantly different in their perceptions of the actual role of the secondary principal in negotiations.

Table 4

Mean Item Scores of Principals by District Size; Results of Tukey's HSD Test

	$\bar{X}$ (actual)	$\bar{X}$ (ideal)
a) large size school districts	3.98	4.37
b) middle size school districts	3.78	4.08
c) small size school districts	3.40	3.58
Total	3.72	4.01
	$\bar{a}-\bar{b}$=.20(NS)	$\bar{a}-\bar{b}$=.29(NS)
	$\bar{a}-\bar{c}$=.58*	$\bar{a}-\bar{c}$=.79*
	$\bar{b}-\bar{c}$=.38	$\bar{b}-\bar{c}$=.50*
	(actual)	(ideal)

*Differences significant at the .05 level of confidence.

In addition to the findings derived from the testing of the hypotheses, the raw data generated interesting additional findings. Superintendents, as a group, had the strongest perceptions that the principal should, ideally, and actually did occupy a role as a member of the management team. Local education union/association presidents had the weakest perceptions that the principal should, ideally, and actually did occupy a role as a member of the management team. As Table 2 indicates, the relative ordering of the four role groups' perceptions was identical for both the actual and ideal roles.

With respect to the variable size, superintendents of large school districts had the strongest perception that the secondary school principal actually did occupy a role as a member of the management team in negotiations, while small

school district superintendents had the weakest. Secondary school principals of large school districts had the strongest perception that their actual and ideal roles were as members of the management team, while small secondary school principals had the weakest perceptions.

Finally, the actual and ideal perceptions of the four role groups regarding the secondary school principals' negotiations role are significantly related, as indicated in Table 5, below. It is clear that they perceive the actual behavior of the secondary school principal to be very similar to what they think it should be. The similarity between actual and ideal is greater for the secondary principals, themselves, .75, and weakest for the union/association presidents, .52.

Table 5

Correlation of the Real and Ideal Perception of the Negotiating Role of the Secondary School Principal for the Four Role Groups

Group	Coefficient of correlation
board presidents	.72*
superintendents	.68*
secondary principals	.75*
union/association presidents	.52*

*Significant at the .01 level of confidence

Discussion

Taken collectively, these findings generally support a perception of the secondary principal as actually and ideally occupying a role as part of the management team in the collective negotiations process. Size of school district is an important factor relating to this perception, particularly in the extremes. Apparently, middle size school districts are more variant in their perceptions, reflecting, perhaps, that these school districts share as many large district

characteristics as small district ones. Assuming these perceptions to be accurate, the data suggest possible reasons for the teacher-principal conflicts that frequently characterize large school districts and which are relatively rare in small districts. It is assumed that middle size school districts fall somewhere in between in this regard. Since superintendents do not differ significantly in their perceptions of the ideal role of the prinicpal, but differ, in their perceptions of the actual role, there is the possibility that small school district superintendents view their secondary school principals as not fully responding to the expectation of the ideal role. The transient nature of the rural principal in Oklahoma is partially explainable in terms of superintendent-principal conflict, resulting in termination or resignation.

An analysis of responses of the secondary school principals, themselves, support the theme of small-large district difference. This analysis suggests that small school district secondary school principals are signficantly different from those of large and middle size school districts in their ideal perceptions of their roles. Small school principals view identification with the management team as significantly less desirable than principals from other size districts. In addition, small school principals view themselves as actually occupying a management role less strongly than do principals from large and middle size school districts; significantly less so than large school district principals. Middle size district secondary principals, while strong in the feeling that they should be a part of the management team, are as likely as small school district principals to feel that they actually are not occupying a strong role on that team. It seems clear that these size differences reflect the reality that the small district principal is more likely to actually teach and, thus, possess a stronger philosophical and practical identification with teachers.

The vast majority of small school districts in Oklahoma do not negotiate contracts with teachers. These data suggest reasons why these districts do not negotiate. It is possible that, given the greater orientation of small school principals toward the teacher team, small school teachers feel that they are more able to influence the principal in those matters often at issue in collective negotiations. They are possibly more apt to percieve themselves as being able to work cooperatively with their principals in resolving problems without the kind of formality and distrust implicit in formal negotiation.

That presidents of local union/associations viewed the secondary school principal's role in negotiations significantly different from the other role groups, acutally and ideally, is not surprising, given the labor-management negotiation model. However, their responses support the general findings of differences in perceptions related to size. These presidents are less given to the ideal perception of the secondary school principal as a member of the management team. They also percieve the principal as actually serving more in the teacher team role. Collectively, these data highlight the differences in principal-teacher dynamics in small school districts, as opposed to larger school districts.

These authors are surprised that length of time in negotiations did not appear to contribute significantly to differences in perceptions of the role of the secondary school principal in negotiations. Several possible explanations exist. One is that perceptions may precede establishment of the collective negotiations process. That is to say that, perhaps collective negotiations are not initiated until certain role perceptions of the principal are formed. Once formed, the role groups simply "play out the script." The other possible explanation is that once the negotiations process is initiated, the rules and structure are such that perceptions are shaped very rapidly, perhaps within one or two years. At any rate, these authors are persuaded that by the end of five years of negotiations,

perceptions of negotiation roles are solidly formed and, barring exceptional circumstances, are unlikely to change.

The supplementary analyses, which involved correlating the ideal and real scores of the four role groups, were interesting, revealing and supportive of the basic thrusts of the primary analysis. Scores of the four groups were significantly related. A reasonable interpretation of these correlations is that the groups' ideal and actual perceptions are related in some manner. These authors suggest that there is a tendency for people to perceive in actuality what they expect and desire to see. What one believes is often what one sees. Practically, these analyses revealed the descrepancy between percieved ideality and percieved reality. The least descrepancy existed for secondary school principals; the most, for local union/association presidents. It could be argued that these principals have more effectively balanced the ideal and the real than the other role groups. Local union/association presidents have been least effective in achieving this balance. Because local union/association presidents generally change more frequently than secondary school principals, particularly in large and middle size school districts, the low correlation coefficient for local union/association presidents possibly reflects experience and job maturation factors related to achieving balance in ideal/actual perceptions and perspectives. It could likewise be argued, on this basis, that the role of the secondary school principal in negotiations is a cause for greater stress and dissonance for local teacher union/association presidents than for any of the other role groups. Interestingly, it appears that school superintendents are likely to be the next most stressed of the role group in terms of the similarity between the real and actual negotiating behavior of the principals.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions seemed warranted:

(1) Differential perceptions of school board presidents, superintendents, secondary school principals and local union/association presidents regarding the role of the secondary school prinicpal in collective negotiations are not significantly affected by the length of time a school district has been involved in negotiations.

(2) Size of school district is a significant factor in the differential perceptions of school board presidents, superintendents, secondary school principals and local union/association presidents regarding the role of the secondary school principal in negotiations. The greatest differences are between large and small school districts.

(3) Middle size school districts are more similar to large school districts than to small school districts in terms of role perceptions of the secondary school principal in collective negotiations on the part of school board presidents, superintendents, secondary school principals and local union/association presidents.

(4) Local union/association presidents feel less strong than the school board presidents, superintendents and secondary school principals that the principal should be a part of the management team in negotiations; superintendents feel most strongly about that role.

(5) School board presidents, superintendents, secondary school principals and local union/association presidents experience a descrepancy between the ideal and actual perceptions of the roles of the secondary school principals in collective negotiations. The greatest

descrepancy exists on the part of local union/association presidents; the least, on the part of secondary school principals.

(6) The perceptions of the role of the secondary school principal in collective negotiations are least stressful for secondary school principals and more stressful for local union/association presidents than for school board presidents and superintendents.

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The Perceptionnaire

The perceptionnaire, a title assigned by these authors, is a 28-item instrument designed and validated by Ernest Weber and used in his Idaho (1976) study. The perceptionnaire is a twenty-eight item instrument; 14 of the items measure actual perceptions; 14 measure ideal perceptions. The respondents select a response option from "1" to "5" reflecting a strong disagreement and strong agreement, respectively, with each statement in the instrument. Higher scores are interpreted as reflecting a secondary school principal negotiations pasture as a member of the management team, either ideally or actually. Lower scores are reflective of a negotiations posture as a member of the labor team.

In scoring the questionnaire, a mean item score was calculated by totalling the scores on each item for the appropriate group and dividing by the number of persons in that group. A mean item score of 4.1, for instance, would mean that the group, as a whole, tended to choose a response in the "strongly agree" category. Generally, such a response would be interpreted to mean that the secondary school principal was viewed actually or ideally as assuming a role more favorable to superintendents and boards of education than to teachers.

APPENDIX A

CONFIDENTIAL SURVEY

Role of the Principal in Teacher Negotiations

Instructions: Please indicate with a check mark the appropriate response to the following questions as they apply to you or your school district.

1. I am a (If more than one, check the first category that applies)

_____ (a) School Board President
_____ (b) Superintendent
_____ (c) Secondary Principal
_____ (d) Local Teachers' Organization President
_____ (e) Teaching Principal

2. Number of students in your school district _____

3. Years your district has had actual negotiating sessions between the school board and the teachers' association (through 82-83 school year).

_____(a) none _____(c) 2 years _____(e) 4 years
_____(b) 1 year _____(d) 3 years _____(f) more than 4 yrs

Instructions: The following questions are asked to determine the present role of principals. Circle the response you consider most appropriate.

Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree	
5	4	3	2	1	Principals may be members of the school board's negotiating team.
5	4	3	2	1	Principals are involved in the process of collective negotiations.
5	4	3	2	1	Principals do not act as resource persons to both negotiating teams.

Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree	
5	4	3	2	1	Principals do not provide information and guidance during professional teacher organization meetings.
5	4	3	2	1	Principals do not discuss their concerns about topics being negotiated during regular faculty meetings.
5	4	3	2	1	Principals hold special administrative meetings to determine their position regarding topics being negotiated.
5	4	3	2	1	Principals participate in decisions concerning negotiations during formal negotiation sessions.
5	4	3	2	1	Principals are knowledgeable about the topics and issues under consideration during collective negotiations.
5	4	3	2	1	Principals are consultants to the school board's negotiating team.
5	4	3	2	1	Principals are not consultants to the teachers' negotiating team.
5	4	3	2	1	Principals do not discuss topics being negotiated on an individual basis with teachers.
5	4	3	2	1	Principals participate in decisions concerning negotiations prior to formal negotiations.
5	4	3	2	1	Principals discuss their concerns about topics being negotiated in regular administrative meetings.
5	4	3	2	1	Principals are not members of the team representing the teachers' organization during negotiations.

Instructions: The following questions are asked to determine the ideal role of principals. Circle the response you consider the most appropriate.

Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree	
5	4	3	2	1	Principals should be members of the school board's negotiating team.
5	4	3	2	1	Principals should be consultants to the school board's negotiating team.
5	4	3	2	1	Principals should be knowledgeable about the topics and issues under consideration during teacher negotiations.
5	4	3	2	1	Principals should not discuss topics being negotiated on an individual basis with teachers.
5	4	3	2	1	Principals should discuss their concerns about topics being negotiated in regular administrative meetings.
5	4	3	2	1	Principals should not act as resource persons to both negotiating teams.
5	4	3	2	1	Principals should participate in decisions concerning negotiations prior to formal negotiations.
5	4	3	2	1	Principals should not provide information and guidance during teachers' professional organization meetings.
5	4	3	2	1	Principals should be involved in the process of collective negotiations.
5	4	3	2	1	Principals should not discuss their concerns about topics being negotiated during regular faculty meetings.
5	4	3	2	1	Principals should not be members of the team representing the teachers' organization in negotiations.
5	4	3	2	1	Principals should not be consultants to the teachers' negotiating team.

Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree	
5	4	3	2	1	Principals should hold special administrative meetings to determine their position regarding topics being negotiated.
5	4	3	2	1	Principals should participate in decisions concerning negotiations during formal negotiating sessions.

When you have finished, PLEASE check to see that you have answered all questions. Then place the questionnaire in the accompanying self-addressed envelope and mail promptly.

THANK YOU